

VZCZCXRO0330
RR RUEHPW
DE RUEHBUL #1508/01 1740549
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 220549Z JUN 08
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4447
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 001508

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, S/CRS, EUR/RPM
NSC FOR WOOD
OSD FOR WILKES
CENTCOM FOR CG CSTC-A, CG CJTF-101 POLAD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [ECON](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: GHAZNI PROVINCE: SECURITY REMAINS A CHALLENGE, BUT
SLOWLY IMPROVING GOVERNANCE BRINGS HOPE

REF: KABUL 752

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Security in Ghazni's Pashtun belt remains a challenge, but the Afghan National Police (ANP) are slowly improving. The province is beginning to attract more donor attention, which will hopefully revive Ghazni's stagnant economic development. Ghazni has had four governors in the last nine months, but security chiefs have remained in place and the Provincial Council's performance has improved substantially.

Security: Number of Incidents Increases, but Police Begin to Improve

¶2. (SBU) The number of security incidents in Ghazni during the first six months of 2008 was 16 percent higher than the corresponding period in 2007. Insurgent tactics consist primarily of small arms and rocket-propelled grenade fire on military convoys and commercial trucks, and of IED emplacement. The latter has become more effective as insurgents develop larger and more sophisticated pressure-plate devices and implant them in greater numbers. In May 2008, a section of the Ring Road was damaged when a large IED exploded in a culvert * the first instance of a paved road being mined in Ghazni. Most of Ghazni's secondary dirt roads are heavily mined, preventing rural Pashtuns from easily accessing the Ring Road and its markets and inhibiting reconstruction activities. Still, insurgents faced a robust response by Coalition and Afghan National Security Forces. The U.S. Army maneuver battalion in Ghazni has expanded its presence to Giro district, while the PRT plans to build additional paved roads in several turbulent districts.

¶3. (SBU) Ghazni's ANP are also doing a better job of responding to insurgent attacks. In at least three instances this year, police held their ground, returned fire, and drove off attackers. A Guam National Guard company partners with police in Qarabagh district, helping the ANP to man several outposts and ensure Ring Road security. Focused District Development (FDD) has begun in Deh Yak District and will expand to three more districts by year's end. Afghan National Civil Order Police are well regarded in Deh Yak, though some residents complain that they do not patrol sufficiently. Governor Usman will reach out to elders and mullahs to ensure that FDD recruitment shuras net qualified candidates.

14. (SBU) Development in Ghazni is stagnant, though increased donor attention may help to change that. UNAMA plans to open a field office in the province. The PRT has oriented its reconstruction activities toward road building and support to the education and health sectors in the Hazara belt. A new Texas National Guard Agribusiness Development Team and a Polish addition to PRT Ghazni arrive this month, expanding the PRT's reach and resources. GIROA's own development activities are still hampered by staff vacancies, particularly in critical sectors such as health and agriculture. The Provincial Development Council is ineffective, though the addition of two technical advisors funded by USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) program and continued PRT mentoring should improve its performance.

Governance: Turmoil in the Governor's Office, but the Provincial Council Gains Stature

15. (SBU) There has been considerable turmoil at the top of the provincial administration, with four governors since August. Ghazni's latest Governor, Dr. Mohammad Usman, took office on May 31, following the short terms of Sher Khosti (March - May 2008) and Faisanullah Faisan (September 2007 - March 2008). Usman's priorities include outreach to religious and tribal leaders and to local insurgent fighters who might be reconciled to the government. He proposes to

KABUL 00001508 002 OF 002

link the government to the people through the creation of elders, and mullahs, shuras at the district and village level. This approach has worked well in Deh Yak, Ghazni's most successful Pashtun-belt district (reftel). Usman has been well-received by local leaders who were alienated by his predecessor's western ways. LGCD has placed technical advisors in the Governor's office.

16. (SBU) After a two-month delay, Ghazni's Provincial Council (PC) held leadership elections in March. Under new leaders, it is showing unprecedented dynamism. It no longer treats the PRT as the solution of first resort. Instead, the PC summons line directors and NGO representatives, questions them on their work, and demands results.

17. (SBU) Ghazni's police force is understaffed, with roughly 1,800 officers out of a Tashkil (staffing plan) allotment of 2,777. Afghan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP) & sustainment training reaches 80 to 90 men each month. Before the ANAP program ends on October 1st, most ANAP will receive sustainment training, enabling them to transition to regular police service. Deh Yak became Ghazni's first FDD district in March, and its police will return from FDD training in late June. Provincial Police Chief Khan Mohammad, in office since November 2007, is starting to lose momentum. In the beginning, he weeded ghost police from the roles, implemented electronic salary payment for 300 men, and got MOI ID cards to 1,740 ANP, but he has recently been accused of corruption. At a minimum, he has become less proactive, though several of his staff officers are promising and carry out reforms.

18. (SBU) Most of Ghazni's 19 District Administrators (DAs) are ineffectual, but the situation is improving. Former Governor Khosti relieved three weak performers, but he had difficulty finding qualified persons for DA slots. Governor Usman plans to ask local elders and mullahs to caucus and propose candidates to him, ensuring popular support for new DAs. District centers remain inadequate in terms of security, facilities and staffing; many are little more than police stations. In April, LGCD trained DAs and district department heads. Among the line ministries, the Health and Finance line ministries are still strong performers, while Education, under a new director, has lost momentum and focus.

Justice sector departments benefit from INL's Justice Sector Support Program and new CJTF-101 Rule of Law initiatives. However, pay, infrastructure and popular skepticism limit modern legal institutions, reach and effectiveness.

DELL